

# COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES \_\_\_\_\_ CHAPTER 9

## ■ Introduction

The adequacy and availability of community facilities is a necessary part of the comprehensive planning process due to the importance of maintaining and attracting future residents, businesses and industries to the area. Growth needs to be managed in such a way as to not put an undue burden on existing community facilities, and thereby negatively affect the overall quality of life in the County. It is important that the prioritizing, scheduling and construction of community facilities meet the needs of current and future populations, while at the same guide and direct growth in an orderly and logical manner. The highest priorities should be in areas that are targeted for growth in the short term, as illustrated on the Development Opportunities Map illustrated in Chapter 11. The County should avoid “leapfrog” development in low-density areas and the inefficient use of infrastructure dollars constructing facilities in these areas.

This Community Facilities Element inventories the various public and semi-private facilities and services available in Columbia County. It also assesses the quality and availability of these community facilities with respect to the impact of projected population and economic growth through the year 2020. This section utilizes population estimates and projections as well as projections of economic growth located in the Population and Economic Elements as a basis for need assessment and the development of Level of Service (LOS) Standards, where appropriate.

## ■ Public Safety

Public Safety includes sheriff services, emergency medical services, fire protection and animal control. The Columbia County Sheriff’s Office provides general police protection. All other public safety functions are provided through the Columbia County Emergency Services Division.

### **Columbia County Sheriffs Office**

Columbia County residents depend on the Columbia County Sheriff’s Office for law enforcement including the serving of arrest warrants and civil papers. Last year the Sheriff’s Office responded to approximately 86,000 calls for service, with an average response time of four to five minutes. In addition to the Sheriff and Chief Deputy, the office has 48 positions in Management Services (18 certified, 30 civilian), 124 positions in the Field Operations Bureau (111 officers, 10 school crossing guards, and 3 secretaries), 59 positions at the current detention facility (32 certified, 21 jail certified, and 6 civilians), and 35 certified reservists.

The Sheriff’s Office operates a substation in Evans and a main office in Appling. The Evans substation serves as the base of operation for the field patrol division and the Appling office houses the records bureau, administration, and detention facility. Currently the detention facility is undergoing a \$6 million expansion to increase the bed count to approximately 200 with appropriate ancillary facilities. The expanded facility will be based on a pod configuration, which will allow a single guard to monitor up to 50 inmates at once. The existing facility is based on a linear design and requires one guard per every 12 inmates. As a result of the deten-

tion center expansion, the Sheriff's Office has requested 39 new positions to be approved for the July 2000 fiscal year. The positions include 37 jailers, 1 clerk and 1 Major.

Grovetown and Harlem both operate independent Police Departments.

### **Fire and Emergency Medical Services**

Columbia County gets its fire protection and emergency medical services (EMS) through the Emergency Services Division. Six fire departments are located throughout the county in Martinez, Grovetown, Harlem, Appling, Winfield and Leah. Service areas for each department in the urbanized areas of the county are well defined, with response times averaging only four minutes per call. However, there is some overlap in the coverage provided by the volunteer fire departments in the less populated areas of the county, specifically Appling, Winfield, and Leah. Response times in the rural areas are a bit longer since these stations are not in operation on a 24-hour basis, but emergency calls in these areas are assisted by back-up from the Martinez Fire Department. The Emergency Services Division operates a fleet of 55 emergency vehicles, with the largest concentration located in the Martinez Fire Department.

### **Animal Control**

The Emergency Services Division provides animal control services in Columbia County. There is an animal control facility located on Columbia Road in Appling, with a fleet of six trucks that provide coverage throughout the entire county. Plans are in place to expand the existing facility to provide a separate viewing area for individuals interested in adopting pets.

### **Assessment of Public Safety Needs**

Columbia County provides police protection and law enforcement through the Sheriff's Office and the Emergency Services Division handles all other public safety services. The County is currently meeting the needs of its residents adequately. As growth continues in outlying parts of the County, more formalized service areas should be established to deliver public safety services more efficiently and prevent redundancy. Particular attention should be directed to increasing Fire and Emergency Services for the emerging Greenbrier Town Center in order to prevent overburdening the resources currently dedicated to the Evans Town Center area.

## **■ Hospitals and Other Public Health Care Facilities**

The County's health care services and facilities are provided through a network of modern private hospitals and clinics, a coordinated system of public health clinics, and numerous independent health care providers. The Columbia County Health Department has three clinics serving Martinez-Evans, Harlem-Grovetown, and Appling.

### **Hospitals**

The residents of Columbia County are served by several excellent Hospitals and Medical Centers in the immediate metro Augusta area, including: University Hospital in Augusta, Doctors Hospital (formerly Columbia-Augusta Medical Center) in Augusta, Dwight David Eisenhower Army Medical Center (DDEAMC) at Fort Gordon, and St. Joseph Hospital in Augusta.

University Hospital, located 1350 Walton Way, is the community hospital for the metro Augusta area. The 612-bed multi-service medical facility provides acute in-patient and outpatient emergency care, intensive care, trauma, and psychiatric care and operates two nursing homes, one in Columbia County. There are plans to completely renovate the emergency care facilities in the next three to four years. In addition, the hospital addresses the specialized needs of women's healthcare issues with the W.G. Watson Women's Center.

Doctors Hospital is a private multi-service medical facility located 3651 Wheeler Road in Augusta. The facility is licensed for 354 beds and provides acute in-patient and outpatient care including emergency and intensive care. Recently, in 1998, the hospital embarked on a \$14 million expansion and renovation project to better serve the needs of patients and staff. Doctors Hospital also provides specialized care for burn victims at their premier Burn Center, which celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> year of treatment in 1998. The burn center boasts a 96 percent survival rate and treats an average of 700 burn victims annually. In addition, the hospital operates two satellite facilities, one in Columbia County at 635 Washington Road. The satellite facilities provide day surgery treatment for outpatients.

The Dwight David Eisenhower Army Medical Center is a 400-bed hospital located at Fort Gordon that serves the needs of military personnel, their dependents and retirees across the Southeast. In addition, Eisenhower is a teaching hospital, training civilian doctors and nurses in a number of vital medical disciplines.

St. Joseph Hospital, located at 2260 Wrightsboro Road, is 236-bed medical facility that specializes in women's health care and minimally invasive surgical procedures. The hospital has taken its mission into the community via a major home-health-care initiative that extends into 18 counties surrounding metro Augusta, including Columbia County. The St. Joseph Hospice Program fills the medical, emotional, spiritual and social needs of terminally ill patients and their families. In addition, St. Joseph has a partnership with University Hospital as the joint-owner of Brandon Wilde, a self-contained retirement community for older adults that has been ranked among the top 20 facilities of its kind in the country.

## **Public Health**

The Columbia County Health Department operates three clinics in Martinez-Evans (Government Center), Harlem-Grovetown, and Appling. The Martinez-Evans and Harlem-Grovetown clinics were constructed within the last ten years, but the Appling clinic was built in 1976. In response to recent pressures resulting from population growth in the Appling area, the Appling clinic is in the process of taking bids for the renovation and expansion of the facility in order to better serve present and future health needs in the Appling area. This expansion will involve approximately 1800 SF of new office space along with renovated exam rooms and clinic facilities. The Health Department is beginning to do more community outreach programs and it is anticipated that this shift in the provision of clinical services will have tangible effects on future facility needs.

## **Senior Services**

Presently, Columbia County provides senior services at the senior center within the Bessie Thomas Community Center, built in 1994. Located at 5915 Euchee Creek Drive in Grovetown, this 1,800 square foot multi-purpose public community and senior center accommodates up to 125 people seated and 200 for reception style events. With a pool table, TV room, and arts and crafts room, the senior center offers a range of recreational programs and activities for senior citizens. This center also houses the Harlem/Grovetown Health Department.

## Assessment of Public Health Needs

Current public facilities and private hospitals are highly regarded and serve Columbia County residents well. As population increases, area hospitals will continue to expand their facilities and services to meet these needs. The county will support the development of a new hospital in the area if the need arises. The county is also encouraging the development of extended care facilities to meet the future needs of its aging population. Such facilities should be located in the vicinity of one of the five identified Town Centers, particularly Evans, in order to maximize opportunities for partnerships with existing health care and other services providers.

## ■ Parks and Recreation

There are ten parks and three community centers that make up Columbia County's parks and recreation system. Riverside Park is the newest park in the county with a third phase, including four additional ball fields and an open play area, planned to be finished later this year. Grovetown currently has a new park under construction, with assistance from the Community Services Division. This new park will include four ball fields, two tennis courts, two soccer fields, two basketball courts and a lake with a walking trail around the perimeter. Some consideration is being given to the possibility of redeveloping Reed Creek Park into a passive recreational site due to its current proximity to a wetland area. Since Reed Creek Park was developed originally in the 1970s with funding from the Department of Natural Resources, redevelopment of this site would necessitate replacement of the existing recreational facilities elsewhere in the County. The new passive park might include above ground boardwalks with a focus on wetland interpretive elements and indigenous plants.

The Community Services Division expects to release a Request for Proposals (RFP) to complete a Parks Master Plan later this year. The RFP is contingent upon approval of SPLOST funding for the project. The master planning process is expected to take approximately six to nine months to complete. The Master Plan will look at existing and proposed parks and recreation facilities and make recommendations regarding future facilities. It will also include an organizational analysis of the Community Services Division and an assessment of current programs.

### Public Parks

The following is a list of current parks:

1. Appling Park: 6.32 acres, 30 parking spaces, located on Highway 221 just outside of Appling and contains 2 baseball/softball fields, 1 tennis court, 1 basketball court, 2 playgrounds, 1 batting cage, and restrooms.
2. Blanchard Park: 25 acres, 30 parking spaces, located on Dewey Drive in Evans off Belair Road and contains 2 baseball/softball fields, 1 small soccer field, 2 batting cages, playground, and restroom facilities. Future development will include a  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile-walking trail.
3. Goodale Park: Located in Grovetown off Lewiston Road and contains 2 baseball/softball fields, 2 tennis courts, 1 basketball court, playground, walking trail, and restrooms.
4. Harlem City Park: 13.5 acres, 120 parking spaces, located in Harlem on Church Street and contains 4 baseball/softball fields, 1 tennis court, 1 basketball court, 2 playgrounds, 1 batting cage, and restrooms.
5. Mistletoe State Park: 1,972 acres, approx. 2,000 parking spaces, located on Clarks Hill Lake and contains 92 campsites, 10 cabins, 4 picnic shelters, 1 year-round group shelter, new pioneer area for group camping, canoe and boat rentals, and 3 boat ramps.

6. Patriots Park: 100 acres, 600 parking spaces, located on Columbia Road in the center of the County, this facility houses the recreation department and contains 6 baseball fields, 5 softball fields, 9 tennis courts, 5 regulation soccer fields, ¼ mile walking track, 18-hole disc golf course, gymnasium, 2 playgrounds, picnic tables and grills, and concession buildings.
7. Reed Creek Park: 13.43 acres, 20 parking spaces, located off Fury's Ferry Road at Forest Creek subdivision, and contains 2 tennis courts, 1 basketball court, 1 handball court, and a small playground.
8. Riverside Park: 55.5 acres, 188 parking spaces, located on Hardy-McManus Road behind Riverside Elementary School, and contains 4 baseball/softball fields, batting cages, 2 tennis courts, boat ramp, fishing pier, playground, picnic tables, 1 shelter, and restrooms.
9. Roberts Field: 2 acres, 30 parking spaces, located on Ruth Drive in Martinez and contains a baseball/softball field and a playground.
10. Wildwood Park: 975 acres, limited parking, located off Highway 74/Washington Road on Holloway Road in Appling at Clarks Hill and contains 64 campsites with electricity and water hookups, double boat ramp, archery range, playground, horseshoes, basketball, picnic and beach areas, restrooms with showers, and 24-hour security.

### Community Centers

The following is a list of community centers:

1. Bessie Thomas Center (Health Dept. and Senior Center): 1,800 SF, located in Grovetown, this multi-purpose community and senior center accommodates up to 125 people seated and 200 people for reception-style events.
2. Eubank Blanchard Center: 1,200 SF, located in Appling, this multi-purpose community and senior center accommodates up to 75 people.
3. Savannah Rapids Pavilion: 25,000 SF, located atop an 80-foot bluff in the center of a 31-acre wooded site in Martinez, this facility has 7 meeting/banquet rooms and the capacity to seat 500 for a plated reception, full commercial kitchen, observation deck overlooking the Savannah River and Augusta Canal, and 300 parking spaces.

### Assessment of Park and Recreation Needs

Columbia County's park system consists of eight county parks, one regional park and one state park. An assessment of the park system indicates that the county should focus on improving its neighborhood, "pocket park" and trail facilities as its population grows, while continuing to increase recreational access to Clarks Hill Lake and the Savannah River.

Consistent with national standards, Columbia County currently meets the recommended allocation of 1 acre of playfield per 1000 people and 50 acres of County Park per 100,000 people. However, as Martinez-Evans continues to urbanize, there is a significant need to find opportunities for smaller scale neighborhood parks and passive open space to serve the growing population. Pocket parks are ideally suited to address the passive recreational needs of residents in these urbanizing areas of the County, where open space is becoming a precious commodity. Thus, the five identified Town Centers are appropriate focus areas in which to target existing open space for future small-scale park facilities. Given the rapid pace of development in Martinez-Evans, this area presents the most urgent need for open space preservation, with Greenbrier Town Center as the next highest priority. In Appling, passive open space, such as a public plaza or town green, could be incorporated into a Town Center plan anchored by the existing civic buildings which contribute to the area's rich local history.

Columbia County also meets the national standard of 500 acres per 100,000 people for regional parks, with almost 1000 acres located at Wildwood Park,. As a valuable natural resource and regional amenity, Wildwood Park presents opportunities for future development, such as a multi-purpose center or other expanded recreational facilities.

## ■ Educational Facilities

The Columbia County Board of Education and several private schools provide educational facilities in the county. There are fourteen elementary, five middle, four high schools, and one alternative school within the Columbia County School System. Currently, a sixth middle school, Greenbrier Middle School, is under construction and planned to open for the 2000-2001 school year. Grovetown Elementary is under renovation with a classroom addition that will be ready for occupancy in the 2000-2001 school year. Enrollment as of September 1999 was 17,698 students. The school system includes vocational training, special education and alternative education programs. Test scores for the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, the American College Testing Exam and the Scholastic Assessment Test for the Columbia County School System were above national averages.

### Elementary Schools

#	Name	SQ. FT.	1999-2000 Enr.	Unit Capacity	Portables
1	Bel Air, 325 N. Belair Rd, Evans 30809	50,996	611	32	2
2	Blue Ridge, 550 Blue Ridge Dr, Evans 30809	71,257	865	46	0
3	Brookwood, 455 S. Old Belair Rd, Grovetown 30813	74,512	735	38	0
4	Euchee Creek, 795 Louisville Rd, Grovetown 30813	59,600	545	33	0
5	Evans, 628 Gibbs Rd, Evans 30809	45,163	541	30	3
6	Greenbrier, 5116 Riverwood Pkwy, Evans 30809	59,600	508	33	0
7	Grovetown, 300 4 <sup>th</sup> Ave, Grovetown 30813	64,680	527	34	5
8	Martinez, 213 Flowing Wells Rd, Martinez 30907	50,591	493	34	0
9	North Columbia, 2874 Ray Owens Rd, Appling 30802	42,834	471	26	6
10	North Harlem, 525 Fairview Dr, Harlem 30814	63,389	553	38	2
11	Riverside, 4431 Hardy McManus Rd, Evans 30809	63,121	741	40	2
12	South Columbia, 325 McCormick Rd, Martinez 30907	50,829	612	34	0
13	Stevens Creek, 3780 Evans-to-Lock Rd, Augusta 30907	60,177	605	36	0
14	Westmont, 4558 Oakley Pirkle Rd, Martinez 30907	61,116	688	42	2
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>817,865</b>	<b>7,875</b>		

### Middle Schools

#	Name	SQ. FT.	1999-2000 Enr.	Unit Capacity	Portables
1	Columbia, 6000 Columbia rd, Grovetown 30813	66,732	973	42	10
2	Evans, 4318 Washington Rd, Evans 30809	76,328	658	39	2
3	Greenbrier (Opens in Fall 2000)	108,791	N/A	37	0
4	Harlem, 375 West Forrest St, Harlem 30814	65,060	801	37	12
5	Lakeside, 527 Blue Ridge Dr, Evans 30809	94,919	885	48	3
6	Riverside, 1095 Fury's Ferry Road, Evans 30809	94,919	1088	48	11
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>506,749</b>	<b>4,405</b>		

### High Schools

#	Name	SQ. FT.	1999-2000 Enr.	Unit Capacity	Portables
1	Evans, 4550 Cox Rd, Evans 30809	195,958	1751	78	13
2	Greenbrier, 5114 Riverwood Pkwy, Evans 30809	195,380	1292	70	0
3	Harlem, 1070 Appling-Harlem Hwy, Harlem 30814	153,578	924	54	0
4	Lakeside, 533 Blue Ridge Dr, Evans 30809	162,186	1451	57	8
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>707,102</b>	<b>5,418</b>		

In May 1998, the Five-Year Facilities Master Plan was compiled by the Comprehensive Facilities Survey Team and submitted to the Facilities Services Division of the Georgia Department of Education (GDOE). Based on county population projections, the plan recommended the construction of two new elementary schools and one middle school. It is anticipated that the middle school will be located in Grovetown, but locations for the new elementary schools have not been determined at this time. This is consistent with current enrollment trends, which reflect overcrowding in the middle schools serving the Harlem/Grovetown area. However, based on the number of portable classrooms currently in place at two of the three high schools serving Martinez-Evans, it would appear that additional high school facilities may be needed to accommodate the growing population in this urbanizing area. The GDOE plan will be revised in 2001.

### Assessment of Education Needs

Columbia County's educational facilities are planned and maintained by the Columbia County Board of Education. Given the County's rapid pace of growth in recent years, it is not surprising that enrollment at several schools in the system exceed capacity significantly. At present, this problem is alleviated by the use of portable classrooms, but new school construction will be required in the urbanizing areas of the county to relieve acute overcrowding. The recently completed Greenbrier complex of three new schools, near Washington Road and William Few Park-



way, will accommodate growing enrollments in this developing area during the short term. However, additional facilities and/or expansions are necessary to alleviate current and future overcrowding in the Martinez-Evans area and within the cities of Harlem and Grovetown.

The Columbia County Board of Education will continue to monitor enrollment and population growth and investigate expansion possibilities as necessary. Anticipating the need for future schools, the Comprehensive Plan will recommend future potential school sites.

## ■ Cultural Facilities

### Libraries

There are three public libraries located in Columbia County. System-wide services include reference and information, inter-library loans, programs for children and adults, free library cards to residents, and a large general collection of books, magazines, newspapers, audio and video-cassettes, and compact discs. The County's main library is the Warren C. Gibbs Branch (9,700 SF), which serves the Martinez-Evans area. This facility is badly undersized in relation to the County's growing population. Built for a community of 20,000 persons, the Gibbs Branch now serves an area of over 85,000. As a result of overcrowding and the need for additional shelving, seating and computer space, a mobile unit was added in 1999 to serve as a public meeting room. The Harlem-Grovetown area is served by the Eucree Creek Branch (10,000 SF), constructed in 1994, and the Harlem Branch (15,000 SF), which is over capacity and planned for expansion.

In 1997, the Library Board and the County contracted with the nationally known consulting firm Providence Associates to plan for the future of the main library in Evans. Their report recommended the construction of a 66,000 square foot regional headquarters library at a cost of \$12 million, in order to avoid premature obsolescence before 2010. Since the report, the Board has decided that it would be more cost-effective to remain a member of the region. Thus, without regional administrative areas, a facility of approximately 51,000 square feet could serve the community's needs. Providence Associates recommends an overall site size of 220,000 square feet, approximately four times that of the building, in order to provide adequate space for the building, parking and property setbacks. A possible site for the library is on County property in the area of the new courthouse annex, as recommended by the Evans Town Center Plan. Currently, the preliminary Columbia County SPLOST 2000 report identifies a total of \$7.7 million for the construction of a new main library branch.

### Assessment of Cultural Facilities Needs

Residents in Columbia County currently use the main library in Evans or branches in Harlem and Grovetown. In order to accommodate the needs of a rapidly growing population, the county has plans to build a new expanded main library in the vicinity of the Evans Town Center. Long-range planning should focus on the Greenbrier and Appling Town Centers as appropriate locations for new library construction, based on continued residential growth.

As part of the larger metropolitan Augusta area, the residents of Columbia County have many opportunities to engage in performing and fine arts. However, with the exception of small private facilities, such as galleries and theaters, there are no plans for a performing and/or fine arts center within the county.

## ■ Solid Waste Management

Currently all garbage collection and recycling are managed through private carriers as permitted by Columbia County. Solid waste is disposed at the Baker Place Road landfill, a 112-acre facility jointly owned by the Board of Commissioners and the Columbia County Solid Waste Management Authority (75 acres are permitted for waste disposal with the remaining land area set aside for operations and as a buffer). At present, the landfill utilizes 60 of the 75 permitted acres. The landfill accepts an average of 360 tons of garbage a day, Monday through Friday, and is scheduled to reach capacity in 2005. Two options for expansion have been identified: 1) a side slope change to increase capacity, and 2) expansion of the liner into the adjacent unlined area (or "piggy-backing"). It is estimated Option 1 would add  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 1 year of additional usage of the landfill, while Option 2 would add 2 years. Roadside litter removal is accomplished through the Metro Augusta Clean and Beautiful initiative, which administers the "Adopt-a-Highway Program."

In addition to the County's public landfill, there is a privately operated landfill in the County that accepts solid waste from demolition and construction.

### Assessment of Solid Waste Management Needs

Private garbage and recycling collection has proved satisfactory to residents and businesses. The County will continue to evaluate options for expansion of the existing Baker Place landfill prior to 2005. There are no plans to change current practices in the future.

## ■ Water and Wastewater System

### Water

The County's primary water source, the Point Comfort Road Water Treatment Plant, was constructed in 1972, with an initial capacity of 2 million gallons per day (Mgd). The plant draws raw water from the Steven's Creek Dam Impoundment on the Savannah River and produces potable water through a process of coagulation, filtration and disinfection. The Point Comfort plant's current production capacity is 30 Mgd and is being expanded to 42 Mgd with a high rate capacity of 50 Mgd. Completion is anticipated in Fall 2003. A second water treatment plant was constructed in 1990 near Clark's Hill Lake and the Thurmond Dam. This plant's current production capacity is 3 Mgd and is being expanded to 8 Mgd. Completion is anticipated in Fall 2001. The Clark's Hill Plant draws raw water from Clark's Hill Reservoir north of the plant. Columbia County also has the ability to purchase water from the City of Augusta through two connections to the City's water system.

Currently, the preliminary Columbia County SPLOST 2000 report identifies \$1 million for water system extensions in the Harlem/Grovetown area. This project has been designated to receive Tier I County funds for the purpose of installing a large diameter water line in the I-20/GA221 corridor. The proposed water line would provide service for anticipated industrial development in the vicinity of the Appling-Harlem interchange. In addition, the SPLOST 2000 report identifies funding for storm drainage improvements to rehabilitate existing facilities in urban areas of the County. The funds are allocated in Tiers I, II, and III for a total of \$750,000, with the largest capital outlay occurring in the first tier in the amount of \$500,000.

## **Wastewater**

The Columbia County sewage system began in 1973, with the construction of a gravity flow collection system and two treatment plants, the Reed Creek and Crawford Creek Water Pollution Control Plants (WPCP). The Reed Creek plant, an advanced treatment activated sludge facility was constructed on Steven's Creek Road with an initial capacity of 1.7 Mgd. Expansion to 4.55 Mgd (1994) has allowed Reed Creek to remain the County's primary treatment facility, currently receiving over 70% of the total waste flow. Service area for this plant includes the Reed Creek drainage basin, which contains most of the County's population center. Crawford Creek WPCP serves the upper reaches of the Crawford Creek drainage basin, primarily the area southwest of Belair and Columbia Roads. The plant has a treatment capacity of 1.5 Mgd. The County's most recent sewage treatment facility, the Little River WPCP, was constructed in 1987 off Hardy McManus Road and receives wastes from the Euchee Creek and Betty's Branch drainage basins. It has a capacity of 3 Mgd and is being expanded to 6 Mgd with completion anticipated in Fall 2003. The cities of Harlem and Grovetown operate their own collection and treatment facilities. Septic tanks are employed throughout the rest of the County. Because of low soil percolation rates in some areas, population density should be limited in outlying areas to one family per one to three acres, depending on soil type.

## **Stormwater Management**

Columbia County's stormwater management is covered in the Natural Features chapter of this plan.

## **Assessment of Water and Wastewater Needs**

Except for a small number of water customers in rural parts of the county, Columbia County supplies the majority of the water and wastewater services. However, as population growth continues to spread from the most urbanized areas of the county to what was once rural land, the provision of a comprehensive water and wastewater system is an increasing need to support desired new development. In particular, the I-20 corridor, between the Appling-Harlem and Belair interchanges, has been targeted as the location for future industrial development in the County and will require adequate water service to attract higher density development and support more intensive land use. Similarly, the Harlem and Grovetown areas need water service extensions to serve their communities.

## ■ **General Government**

Columbia County operates under a commission-based system of government in which five commissioners are elected to four-year terms with each serving a separate district. In Columbia County, a chairman is elected from within the group to serve a two-year term. In addition, each commissioner serves as chairman over a specific interest committee, which provides the conduit for information and business to be conducted from the various County departments and the Board of Commissioners. To carry out the programs of the Board of Commissioners, several county officials are appointed by the Commission. The Internal Auditor, County Attorney, and County Clerk are appointed by the Commission and coordinate their activities with the County Administrator. The County Administrator serves as the chief administrative officer for the County and directly supervises all County Department Heads and the Human Resources Manager. The Administrator also coordinates activities and budgets with elected officials,

agencies, boards, and authorities. Civic leaders in Columbia County maintain a pro-business outlook while seeking to balance the needs of their largely residential populations with the necessity of encouraging clean industry and promoting commercial and retail expansion.

The Columbia County Government Center located in Evans is the site for numerous County Departments including Finance, Information Services, Planning and Development, Engineering and Building Standards, Sheriff, Health, Driver's License, Vehicle Tags, and an Auditorium. These departments are housed in a 30,000 square foot facility. In January 2000, the County Board of Commissioners approved the construction contract for a new courthouse and judicial center to be located at the Government Center. The approximately 72,000 square foot facility will house court rooms, hearing rooms, inmate holding rooms and administrative offices.

### **Assessment of General Government Needs**

With the anticipated construction of the new judicial center and the Main Library, the government complex in Evans will continue to house most general government functions and many community services. However, continued growth will undoubtedly place additional demands on these facilities and staff and will require county office additions and improvements. Therefore, methods to accommodate future growth are being explored.

In terms of physical planning, the Evans Town Center Plan (1998), recently adopted by the Board of Commissioners, represents a blueprint for continued managed growth in this area. The plan entails site improvements to unify the Town Center, landscape and streetscape enhancements to reinforce the visual recognition of the area as a distinct place, and the development of more amenities for pedestrians. In addition, the 2000 Capital Improvements Plan allocates funds for the provision of a passive recreational area at the rear of the Evans Government Complex where the existing storm water detention facility is located. This amenity will include walkways, landscaping, and lighting.

As growth continues to spread out from the urbanized core of the County, it will be necessary to evaluate the feasibility and efficiency of a more distributed allocation of governmental facilities. The Appling Town Center area is ideally located for expansion of governmental offices into the western portion of the County. This area represents the symbolic heart of the County and it's historic county seat. With good access from I-20 and an existing small concentration of local government and county offices, Appling is a prime location for long-range governmental expansion.



Columbia County

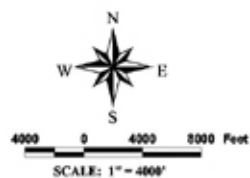
## Community Facilities

### LEGEND

- County Boundaries
- City Boundaries
- Parcel Boundaries
- Major Water Bodies
- Major Roads

### Cultural Features

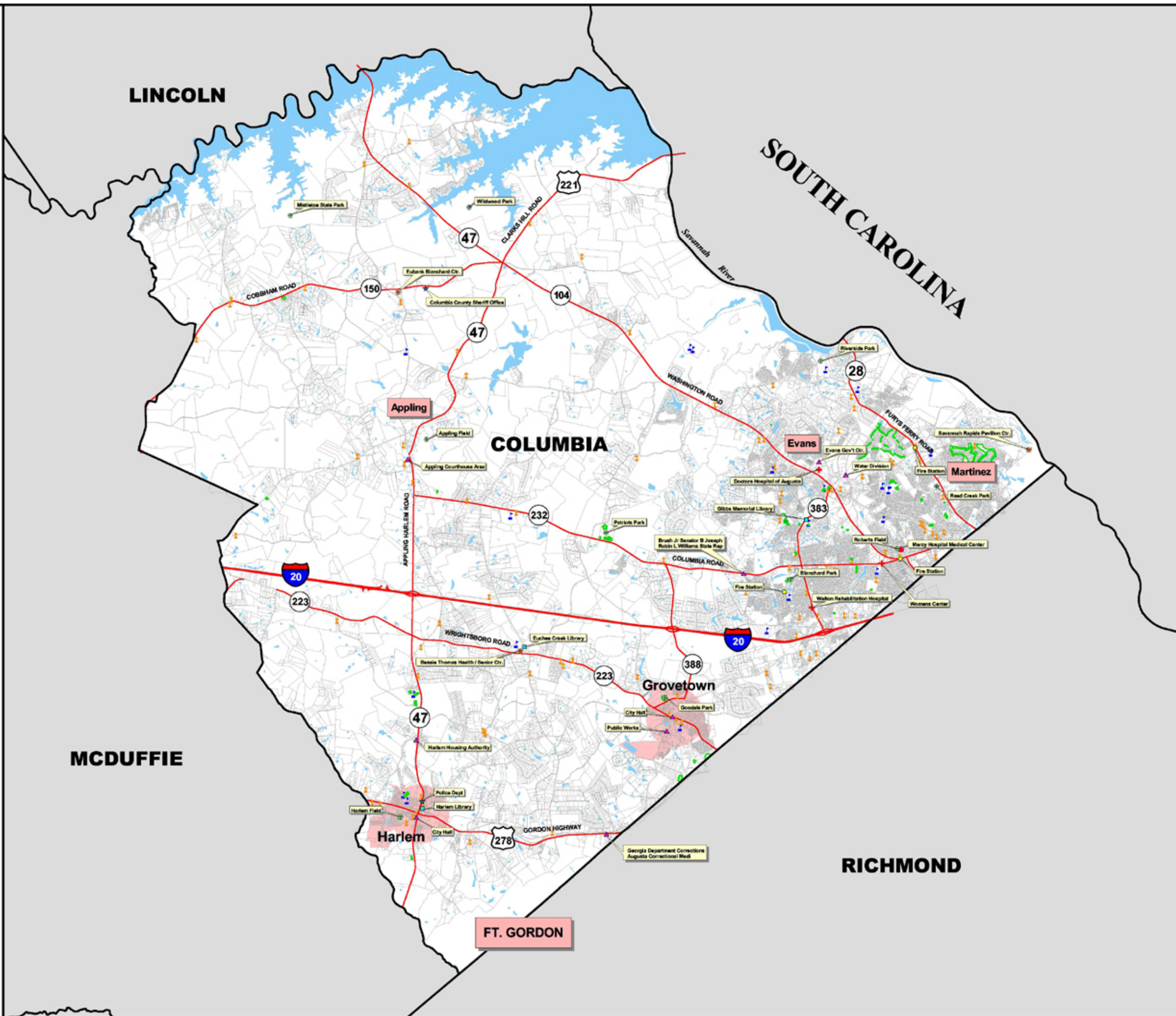
- ★ Police Stations
- ✚ Hospitals
- ▲ Gov't / Admin. Facil.
- Fire Stations
- Libraries
- ✚ Churches
- Schools
- ★ Community Centers
- Parks & Recreation
- ▲ Other Recreation



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PBS



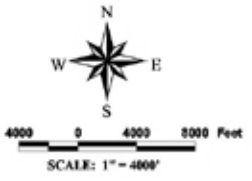




**Columbia County**

**Utilities  
Infrastructure**

- LEGEND**
- County Boundaries
  - Streets
  - Power Easements
  - Water Lines
  - Sewer Lines
  - Water Towers
  - Solid Waste Landfills



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